1: Jenness--63 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"Some houses have a small recess built in a corner near the door; this is for storing meat, or for housing a litter of pups. Sometimes the passage is broadened in one place for the same purpose. Often two houses are joined together, or several unite round a common forecourt which forms the village dance-house."

1: Jenness--65-66
116, 342, 345

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

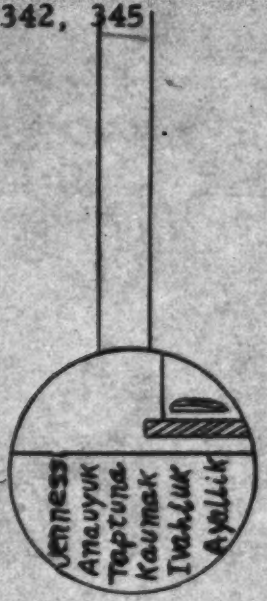


FIG. 13. A typical single-roomed snow hut.

FIG. 14. A single snow hut with a dance-house in front.

1: Jenness--66 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"A development from this type of house is one which has a dance-house in front, built just over the doorway. Fig. 14 illustrates a dwelling of this kind which was seen at an Eskimo settlement in the Duke of York archipelago, Coronation gulf, in February, 1915. The hut belonged to a famous shaman named Uloksak, who at this time possessed two wives; each wife kept to her own side of the hut, where she had her own cooking and drying outfit."

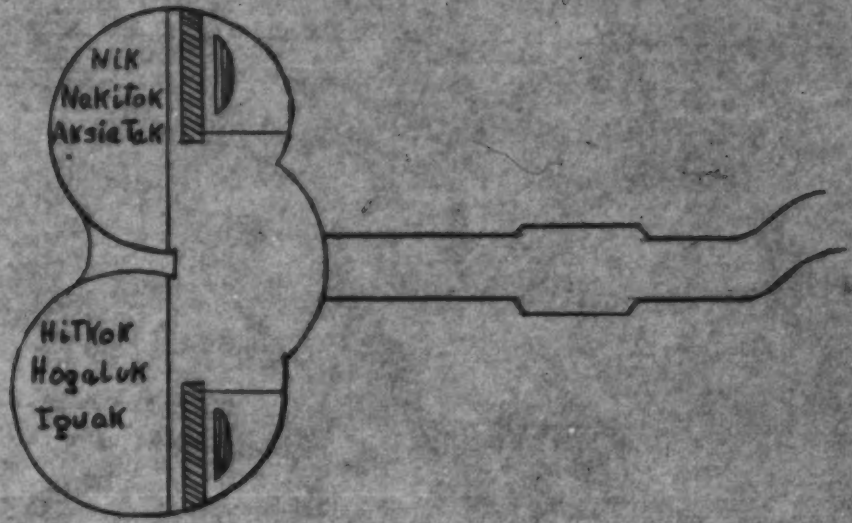


FIG. 19. A two-roomed dwelling, each room opening into the other, with a door-way common to both.

1: Jenness--70-71 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 342, 345

"In the two-roomed hut just described the rooms were parallel with one another. This, however, is not always the case. Fig. 20 gives the plan of a hut in which they are arranged at right angles. It was built in the beginning of January, 1915, to shelter the families of Ikpakhuak and his nephew Huputaun. It would have been exactly the same as the hut represented in Fig. 19, but for the angle at which the two rooms lay with regard to one another. A few [71] days after its construction the front walls of the two rooms were torn down and a large cupola erected over them to form a dance-house for the community. Where the wall of the dance-house joined his room Ikpakhuak made a bed of willow-matting covered with an old sealskin for one of his dogs that had a litter of pups. His family consisted of his wife Higilak, his nephew and adopted son Haugak, (the son of Haviron in Fig. 17), Higilak's daughter (by a former husband) Kanneyuk, who was about twelve years of age, and myself, since this was the family into which I was formally adopted. The other household comprised Huputaun, his wife Uvillok, their baby boy Kotsik, and a little girl Holoak, of about ten years. Apart from the hut itself the passage was interesting because it had a T -shaped entrance, roofed over so that one side or the other could be closed according to the direction of the wind.

So far we have seen two huts coalescing into a single two-roomed dwelling with a dance-house over the forecourt, but nothing in the snow itself prevents three or four huts from coalescing in the same way. The only difficulty lies in the fact that the more

numerous the huts that have to be joined together the larger must be the forecourt or dance-house that connects them, and the more difficult it is to construct when the only material that can be employed is snow. Consequently, while the usual custom is to build the dance-house over a two-roomed hut, one built over three rooms is not at all rare, but one over four is very unusual. Still, all these types are found, since the Eskimos are not bound by any rules in the matter and suit their own convenience."

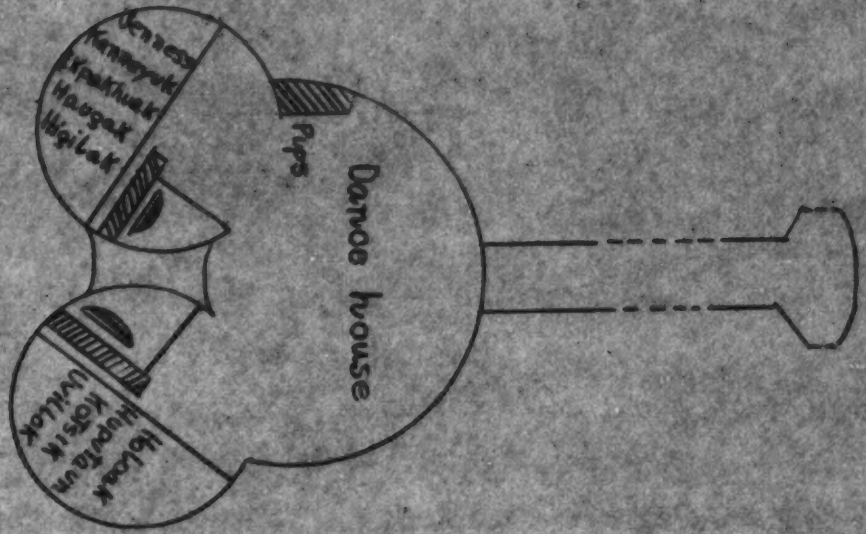


FIG. 20. A two-roomed dwelling opening on a dance-house

1: Jenness--72-73 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116 342, 345

"In November, 1915, a three-roomed dwelling was built at Bernard harbour with a dance-house over the common fore-court. Two of the rooms contained two families each, while the third had only one. Each family had its separate lamp, and the different members slept in the usual places; thus the wife slept [73] in the corner where she could superintend the lamp and the cooking, and between her and her husband was their little child, whenever there was one. The family that lived by itself left the settlement before the rest, so the others closed up the front of the empty room with snow-blocks to make their house smaller and warmer (Fig. 23).

A curious four-roomed dwelling and dance-house was seen at the Liston and Sutton islands in December, 1915. I was not present when it was made and therefore cannot say whether the different rooms were erected at the same time or not. Architecturally two of the rooms must be regarded as excrescences, their only connection with the rest being that their doorways led into the dance-house instead of into a corridor. The dance-house formed the forecourt of the other two rooms, one of which was inhabited by two families not very closely related. Each family, as usual, had its own lamp and furniture, and the places in which the various inmates slept followed the usual custom. The winter that year was very stormy, and both food and blubber were scarce, so that the lamps had to be extinguished in many houses. The two rooms at the back of the dance-house were soon abandoned, as they were cold and uncomfortable unless the lamps were burn-

ing full. The other two families were better off as they could bar their doors and make their rooms airtight; they therefore remained where they were till February, when the whole settlement migrated some ten miles farther west (Fig. 24)."

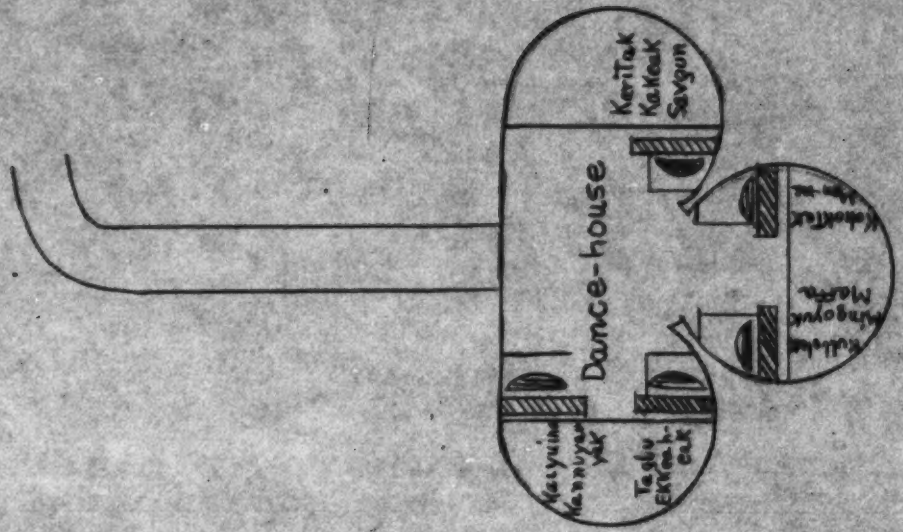


Fig. 23. A three-roomed dwelling with a dance-house

1: Jenness--75
116, 345, 342

(1913-16) 1922

Copper Eskimo

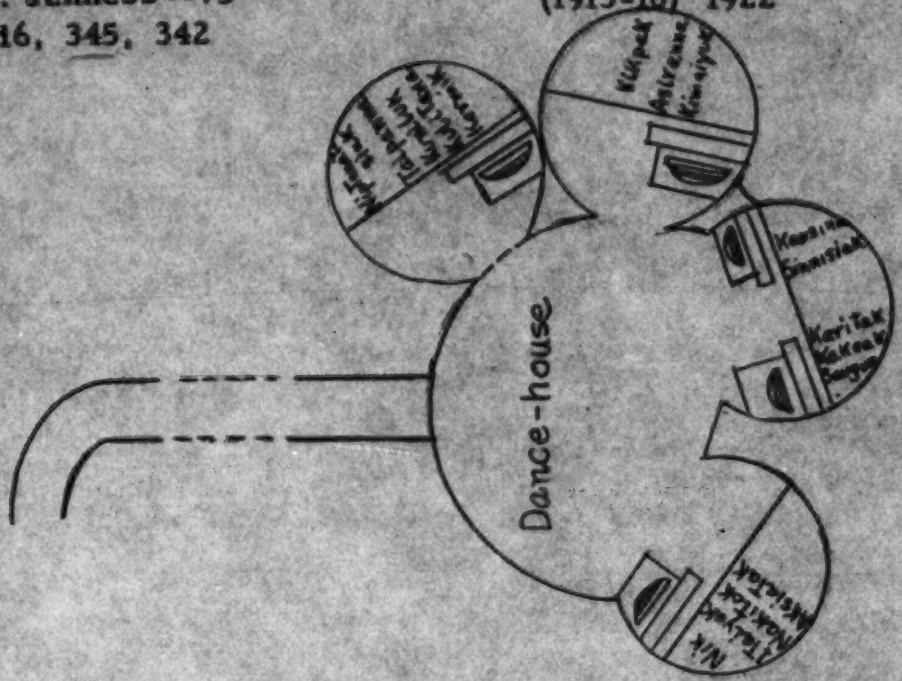


Fig. 24. A four-roomed dwelling with a dance-house

1: Jenness--77 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 345

"The dance-house is not always built over the huts of the same family or families. At the end of a day's migration the men are usually tired, and gladly retire to rest as soon as their huts are finished and the women have prepared a hasty meal. The dance-house is never built till the following day, or even later. Someone, usually a man of influence, will take the initiative, and a friend or relative will cooperate with him, nearly always, of course, the man over whose house he proposes to build. A dance-house can never stand alone, at least not in winter, because there would be no lamp to keep it warm; and it is preferable to build it in front of a two-roomed house rather than of a single hut because then there will be at least two lamps to heat it."

"One of the first actions of a community after it settles down in its winter sealing ground is the construction of a dance-house. This is never a separate structure standing by itself, but a large dome covering the fore part of a single hut, or more usually the fore-courts or two or more huts. In this way it is kept warm by the lamps that are always burning in the dwellings, and is more fitted to fulfil its other function of a club-house."

2: Stefansson--234 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
535, 345, 117

"May 15. Dancing. Dance house built today in our honor. The dance house has its floor on ice level, is about fifteen feet in diameter and eight feet high. It is full six feet in height a foot from the wall, i.e., the roof very flat. In building it, two temporary doors were used on opposite sides. As with all houses, the door faces south. The hallway is about half the usual length, about five feet. The door is a trifle higher than ordinary. There are no seats or benches along walls. People stand in complete circle, some boys in the front row, 'so they can see.' All the men and about half the women present. No special place for the women. A circle about five feet in diameter left for the dancer in center. There was no drum, but their bewailing its absence showed they ordinarily use it. They said: 'We almost never dance. We have no drums any more.' This would imply the dancing on decline. The dance now was entirely perhaps at Billy's instance."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123

[361] of the bay, where a band of children were rolling hoops along the ice of the foreshore. "White man, white man," my companions shouted as they ran. The villagers poured out of their houses and crowded around me, men jostling women, and women pushing aside men, in their eagerness to scan my face and tell me their names. At the last came a tall, dignified man of about middle age who warmly seized my arm and [352] invited me to enter his hut. When I crawled in behind him he set me in the place of honour at the back of the sleeping-platform, dusted the snow from my shoes, and seated himself in front at my feet.

My guide had relatives in this village with whom he proposed to spend the night; but I had many notes to write and desired a separate snow-hut where I could be quiet and undisturbed. The Eskimos gladly built one for me while I unharnessed and fed the dogs; and they vied with each other in unloading the sled, hoping to catch a glimpse of my trade goods. Some stayed to share my supper, boiled rice seasoned with sugar and canned milk; and it was amusing to watch their faces as each in turn swallowed a spoonful of [534] the novel dish. Not all of them shared my own opinion of its excellence, and the discussion that arose about the white man's food might have lasted all night if the distant booming of a drum had not diverted [345] their thoughts and brought about a hasty exodus. The [535] people were holding a dance in my honour, and awaited

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

my presence in the dance-house, which was in this village the forecourt of a large two-roomed hut. Seated in state on a sleeping-platform I watched their monotonous performance for two hours; then weariness overcame me, and, slipping through the low doorway, I retired, unattended, to my new home.

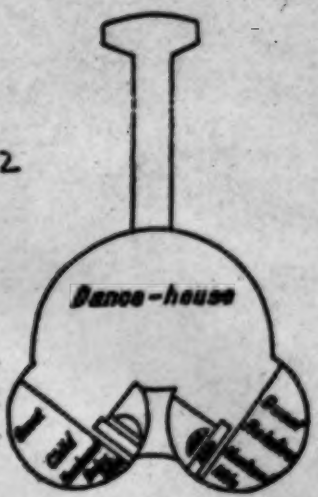
Eskimo dances have a superficial resemblance to the open-air meetings of a church army band, except that the only musical instrument is a drum. The singers form a ring around the leader, who hops and prances rhythmically to the accompaniment of a song. As one dancer tires and steps back into the ring, another takes his place. Women and children alternate with the men, for the sexes have almost equal status in this twilight land. Sometimes the faces of the singers glow with such earnestness that even the alien spectator succumbs to the emotional atmosphere and joins in their embryonic religion. Thus with song and dance they while away the evening hours until one after another drops out of the circle and the gathering dissolves to its homes

I measured the heads and statures of the Eskimos from early the next morning until mid-afternoon. Every man who submitted to the operation received a fish-hook, every woman a needle; and the payment seemed to satisfy them all. On completing these measurements I traded for museum specimens, bartering knives, files, and other articles for lamps and pots

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

342a 352 better idea of its shape and internal arrangements than a lengthy description. Theoretically a snow-hut may be of any size, provided you have ladders, or timber to form a staging. The Eskimos have neither. 345 To build a large dance-hall like that shown in the plan they stand on boxes, bales of clothing, and anything that may be available. So the height of their largest hut never exceeds eight feet, and the diameter is limited to correspond. Being a sociable people, however, two families often share a single dwelling, and two or three others arrange their huts so that they open onto the same passage.

181
342



114
123
264

Imagine us, then, sitting on the edge of the sleeping-platform eating our supper, myself at one end of the line, Mrs. Light at the other facing her table and lamp. The different members of the family are grouped between us, two boys, a grown-up nephew, and lastly Mrs. Light's husband, who naturally has a [431] seat beside his wife. The youngest boy carries presents of fish to the inmates of the other huts, and two little girls who return with him, bringing similar offer-

beneath the snow-floor, making the prohibition technically invalid. We cooked our caribou meat with easy consciences, and, when the natives upbraided us, pointed to a tiny patch of gravel exposed beneath our feet. Some accepted our verdict, most of them still disapproved; but by that time they were better acquainted with the strange ways of the white man, and believed that we could do with impunity what they could not attempt without disaster.

The village dance-house formed as usual the forecourt of two snow-huts, which kept it at an even temperature with their two large blubber-lamps. One hut was occupied by Ikpuckhuak, the elderly man who had come to my rescue when his fellow-tribesman tried to carry off my knife. Ikpuckhuak means the "Dirty One"; but the name in no wise reflected on his personal characteristics, for the Eskimos were too familiar with the lack of water during seven months of the year to pay much attention to some of its consequences. Ikpuck, as I shall call him hereafter, was actually cleaner than most of his countrymen, provided one gives the word a rather broad interpretation; and his name was no more than an ancient family title which he inherited in childhood along with his other privileges.

We spent several pleasant evenings on his sleeping-platform, reclining comfortably on caribou robes and listening to the natives in the forecourt singing their

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

honour. They had built no dance-house, and did not possess a drum; but about thirty squeezed into an ordinary dwelling-house eleven feet in diameter, where they banged my frying-pan and sang at the tops of their voices until the snow-ceiling, melting with the warmth of so many human beings, began to drip ice-cold water on our heads. The din and odour were terrific, more than flesh and blood could endure; so, pushing my way through the crowd, I retired to the purity of the outer air and gradually regained my senses.

We remained in this village one day and two nights while I measured all its adult inhabitants. Seal meat was not plentiful, and a longer stay would have left my dogs without food. Moreover, it was not necessary, for I was now formally introduced to the people, and could study them at my leisure when they joined the other two tribes in the Liston and Sutton Islands at the end of the month.

My party on the return journey was increased by three—Wealthy's cousin, whose wife was already at the island village, and two girls, Mrs. Snow-Knife's sister and another, who were bound on the high-road to matrimony. The brides piled everything they owned on top of my sled, which creaked and groaned under the extra load. Luckily their trousseaux were not as formidable as their white sisters', or we should never have reached our journey's end. The average Eskimo

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

In these and other ways they showed a greater familiarity with the customs of the white man than the natives of Dolphin and Union Strait. We found even more astounding evidences of contact with Europeans when we visited their snow-huts.

The village itself differed slightly from the usual type, the houses being arranged in line and separated by considerable intervals; normally they lie in a cluster, in order that no evil spirits may harm the inmates as they wander in the darkness from one hut to another. Johansen and I began our tour at one end, and dropped a trail of matches and needles along the line to show our appreciation of the scraps of blubber, meat, and fish with which each housewife paid us tribute. The last hut was also the largest. A dance-house framed the entrance, and half a dozen dogs, twice the usual number, squabbled in the passage, indicating that the occupant was a man of influence in his community. We brushed the dogs aside, and crawled on hands and knees through the low doorway at the inner end. Seated in state on his sleeping-platform was Knife, by repute the shrewdest Eskimo, and the most powerful medicine-man, in this section of the country; and on each side of him, supporting his dignity, sat a wife, the one chosen for her beauty, the other for her skill in hunting. He smiled a welcome as we entered, and, with a haughty gesture of his hand, motioned the younger woman to give us her seat.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

574
574 ful again before the strangers reached our camp. We
345 helped them to set up their tent, nibbled some of their frozen seal meat, and hurried away to build a dance-house while the women stayed behind to gossip.

Our dance-house was not the orthodox dome of snow that I had seen in many settlements during the winter, for the roof would have melted and collapsed within twenty-four hours. Instead, we built a circle of snow-blocks three tiers high, and covered it with everything we could lay our hands upon. The rafters were fish-spears and walking-sticks, the roofing the canvas cover of my sled. As the canvas covered no more than half the roof my comrades requisitioned their tent skins to close the gap. They were now without tents again, exposed to any further gales that might arise; so they bundled all their possessions into the dance-house, piled them against the wall each morning, and sorted them out again in the evening at the conclusion of the dancing.

574 For three days we held high revel. All the formal
535 dancing took place on the first day. My people were the hosts, and Icehouse, as the wife of the leading man, had the privilege of opening the ceremony. She performed her dance with much dexterity and grace, far surpassing the leading Tormiat woman, whose angular figure and awkward movements made me think of the puppets in a Punch and Judy show. The other Eskimos followed in the order prescribed by their age

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

the booming of the drum. Were there no war-songs, no chants of victory? They asked me what war meant, for they knew of no enemies except the Indians far to the south, whom they seldom saw and carefully avoided. Surely, then, there were love-songs, songs in which the youth declared his passion and praised his fair one's beauty. No, life was hard, marriage a necessity for all. The maiden must wed a hunter who could provide her with food, clothing, and shelter, and the youth must seek out a bride who would prepare his food and sew his garments. If couples failed to agree, they could separate and find other mates. Beauty, that soon faded, did not help them in the struggle for life's necessities, and romance was stifled. The dance-house was the social hearth. There they chanted their prayers to the mystic powers that controlled the weather, that could shatter the ice-fields or withhold the game; and there, in song, they narrated their adventures and retailed the news from distant tribes. The incantations were their prayers, the dance-songs their chronicle of current events. Ikpuck sang of our polar-bear hunt, and song and story spread far along the coast, growing more garbled and unintelligible at every stage of their journey. The words of his song mattered little; every dancer could improvise new syllables, like the foreigner who sings Italian opera. What counted most was the new melody, bringing joy to the hearts of a people who found in music their